

MARI / ARTIFICIAL REEF UPDATE

OCTOBER, 2014

- **Reef ball project at Bill Burton Fishing Pier, Talbot side** – Staff monitored and participated in CBF’s deployment of over 200 concrete reef balls under the DNR permit at Talbot section of the Bill Burton Fishing Pier Reef, Choptank River near Cambridge. All of the reef balls this year (2014) were built by CBF staff and volunteers. Over the last several years, CBF has been working in partnership with MSSA, MARI and other partners on two reef ball projects in the lower Choptank River. (Bill Burton Pier reef and Cook Pt reef).
- **Memorial Stadium Reef** 1.5 acres were added to Memorial Stadium Reef Ball site (permit modification); staff oversaw the addition of over 100 additional reef balls to site. CBF deployed the reef balls which were constructed by MSSA volunteers and school groups coordinated by Bill Huppert.
- **Hail Cove Reef, Chester River:** Staff in partnership with USFWS, CBF and CCA completed Hail Cove shallow water stone reef along Eastern Neck Refuge Shoreline, lower Chester River. The reef is constructed with 1000 tons of granite class R-4 stone.
- **Love Pt-(ARC construction request):** ARC indicates preference for granite boulders – quarry rock at Love Pt. Plan to proceed with rock placement in southeast corner of existing artificial reef site (50 acre box charted as “fish haven” in 23-35 feet of water) as soon as possible. Staff asked for a revised price estimate for large boulders 3-5 feet in diameter, if feasible. The contractor indicated that the price could go up with the larger boulders as compared to the original price estimate for 24-36 inch “small boulder/rip-rap”. There is more difficulty involved in handling the larger boulders which may require additional equipment and protective measures. Staff conducted a pre-placement survey with Hydrographic Ops to confirm water depth and to look for any crab pot gear that may be in the area. (We are working to avoid conflict with any existing gear.) The area looks clear and suitable and we would like to proceed with construction as soon as possible, when the company is available for doing the job. Other large materials such as concrete slabs and pipe may also be considered for this site as space allows.
- **MARI Volunteer logbook study (update):** August was the last month of the MARI volunteer logbook survey. Of the original 48 mailed to volunteers, a total of 17 logbooks with data and 9 empty logbooks have been mailed back to DNR for data entry (as of 10/10). Staff is expecting at least two more “straggler” logbooks to be returned which would bring the total up to 19 logbooks with data.

Most of the anglers are from the upper Bay region (north of Bay Bridge) and fished Memorial Stadium Reef, starting May 31 and ending August 31. There is also a smaller group from the Cambridge area that fished on Cook Pt Reef in the mouth of the Choptank River. Data are being entered into an Access database.

- **MARI online angler survey (ongoing):** Anglers who are unable to participate in the MARI volunteer logbook survey may participate in the online survey which is running 12 months a year. Participation in this survey has been very low, and it will require more aggressive advertising to get useful data.
- **Recent presentations to sportfishing groups:** Staff gave presentations on MARI reef construction, MARI logbook survey, and dive surveys/photography to MSSA-Perry Hall Chapter in August, and MSSA-Kent Island Chapter, on October 1st.
- **Long-term MARI Report for management and transition team:** Submitted brief summary report and spreadsheet to management team summarizing MARI artificial reef projects since 2007. The report included mainly Bay projects with a few selected ocean projects, where MARI supplied funding and/or logistical support. Approximately 80 acres of artificial reef (actual material placed on bottom) have been added since 2007. The acreage includes the footprint of the retired stainless steel NYC subway cars and the USS Radford in Atlantic Ocean waters. The total weight of the material deployed is over 80,000 tons and the volume is over 33,000 cubic yards.
- **Update on steel reef material, Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant:** Staff conducted site visits to the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant to inspect steel bulkhead panels for possible use in artificial reef projects, as described in previous report. There are a couple of permit issues – the expanded Gooses Reef Corps permit has expired and needs to be renewed, and the language on steel in the State Watershed License lists a long, broad suite of materials but is not as explicit on steel. Sent a request to renew permit to Corps and a dissolved oxygen report from the Gooses Data Buoy to NOAA (condition from old permit). Have not heard back from Corps yet. If needed, a backup site could be used to substitute for the Gooses and staff will get clarification on steel from BPW/MDE. If not used for reef, then the material would probably be sold for scrap metal or recycled following the procedures of Exelon Corporation (the new owner of the Power Plant).
- **Update on Draft reefing plan with Dominion-Cove Point Project (Ongoing):** Met with staff from the Integrated Policy and Review and Power Plant Research Program within DNR to review a draft reefing plan from the Dominion-Cove Point LNG project. The best site option for material from this project near Solomon's Island and other material on site is Cedar Pt (charted Fish Haven off the Patuxent Naval Air Station, mouth of Patuxent River). The time frame of the project includes a few possible batches of material from 2015-2017.

- **MARI Permits renewal needed by August 31, 2015-** The Artificial Reef permit package for 21 reef sites under the MARI umbrella (historically known as “Fish Reefs”, Fish Havens”, or Aquatic Reefs”) will expire on August 31, 2015. There will be an ongoing process beginning in December to renew the state wetland license and federal Army Corps permit that covers these sites.
- **ARC Meeting October 29th** – The next ARC meeting is scheduled for 10/29.